



Bridgewater Review

Volume 11 | Issue 1

Article 4

Apr-1993

Faculty Profile: Edward "Jack" Hart

Recommended Citation

(1993). Faculty Profile: Edward "Jack" Hart. *Bridgewater Review*, 11(1), 3.
Available at: http://vc.bridgew.edu/br_rev/vol11/iss1/4

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FACULTY PROFILE JACK HART

It is quite common these days to pick up a newspaper or watch television and hear about the effects of a particular food on our body. As a result of the emphasis on nutrition in our society, Americans have become increasingly health conscious and aware of how eating behavior contributes to overall good health. At Bridgewater, Professor Edward "Jack" Hart of the Department of Movement Arts, Health Promotion and Leisure Studies is deeply involved in raising the nutritional consciousness of the student body and the surrounding community.

With his background in health promotion, Jack has developed a number of programs to analyze eating behavior as a way of preventing a variety of diseases. Jack works with students in his courses and develops with them a dietary analysis. For example, last semester some students signed a contract in which they pledged to alter their eating behavior over a period of time and were consulted periodically to determine how well they were meeting their contract goals. Changes were then negotiated about their diet and Jack recommended ways in which they can reshape their behavior to avoid the health consequences of certain dietary patterns.

Over the years Jack has found some typical problems in terms of eating behavior. Male students have the most difficulty resisting foods with high animal fat, such as those juicy steaks. Female students, on the other hand, do not have trouble resisting steak but have problems in getting enough iron and calcium, nutrients found in foods such as steak

and dairy foods. All students generally rely too heavily on the pizza and hamburger combination. Jack has found that recently some males at Bridgewater appear to be getting the message in terms of changing their eating behavior away from animal fats, while females at Bridgewater have not been as successful in meeting RDA's (Recommended Daily Allowance) for calcium and iron.

Jack's studies of eating behavior and cardiovascular disease are not only confined to the Bridgewater campus. He has conducted research with the United States Navy and regional day care centers to implement programs that stress dietary change. Jack is particularly interested in the day care centers and in helping the centers develop proper eating patterns early on in young boys and girls. It is a difficult task working with youngsters in light of the fact that television, advertising and the patterns of the parents often tend to negate the efforts of the day care center to stress proper nutrition.

Jack is somewhat encouraged by the fact that more people are conscious of the connection between what they eat and how they feel. Furthermore, the latest government regulations requiring labeling on food, plus the trend in the corporate sector toward wellness training, have reminded Americans about the importance of health behaviors. Jack, of course, is a realist as he recognizes that changing nutritional behavior is a lifelong process requiring constant self-control and education. Those who have ever attempted a diet know the difficulty of changing eating behavior over a

sustained period of time.

Although it may seem simplistic, Jack firmly believes that those interested in changing their eating patterns and avoiding certain nutrition related diseases should be guided by the principles of balance and moderation. It is not so much avoiding certain foods altogether as it is consuming a balance of foods from a variety of food groups and understanding the risks and dangers of faulty dietary patterns. Jack is not opposed to the occasional Big Mac, cheese pizza, or juicy steak as long as they are part of a larger diet that includes chicken, fish, salad, vegetables and fruit. Also, Jack strongly recommends that diet goes hand in hand with regular exercise. At Bridgewater, Jack and his colleague Robert Haslam, who is involved with the exercise component of health promotion, work closely with students to emphasize the importance of the life style approach to disease prevention.

In his eleven years at Bridgewater State, Jack Hart has developed a reputation as an instructor who has made a difference with his students and the community at large. Jack's work in health promotion and his aggressive pursuit of good eating habits have made him a recognized expert in the field of nutritional behavior. If the students at Bridgewater leave the college with a broader understanding of how diet affects health, it is because Jack Hart has used his considerable skills in nutrition and data analysis to make real the oft-used cliché - you are what you eat.

